



News Release

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Mature worker regional meeting set for Fort Smith

LITTLE ROCK – An Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative Regional Meeting for employers will be held at 8 a.m. June 13 at the Fort Smith Adult Education Center, 501 S. 20th St., Fort Smith.

AARP selected Arkansas as one of four pilot states for this national initiative, and Gov. Mike Huckabee selected the initiative as one of his top priorities for the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

The initiative is designed to increase awareness and bring attention to the value of workers 50+. Current projections indicate that 43 percent of the current workforce will be eligible for retirement in the next 10 years. In addition, 61 percent of new entrants into the labor force (age 16 to 25) will not be fully qualified. These factors will result in a significant decrease in the availability of qualified workers.

The Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative will help employers meet this new challenge by increasing the awareness and appreciation of mature workers through relationships with the public workforce system, states, chambers of commerce, national and local training providers, trade associations, labor unions, community organizations, policy makers and business leaders.

Arkansas Workforce Center staff located across the state will provide assessment, employment and training assistance to mature workers and match them with employers utilizing the Arkansas Job Link System. AJL is a Web-based, job-matching system for employers and job seekers. Employers are encouraged to contact their nearest Arkansas Workforce Center or post their job orders on AJL by going to www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov.

Several employers who have expressed their commitment to hiring mature workers have been identified as featured employers on a national level. Many of these companies have offices in Arkansas. A complete list can be found at www.aarp.org/featuredemployers.

In an effort to inform employers about the initiative, regional meetings are being held across the state. At each meeting, an employer panel will discuss the initiative and how companies have

benefited from hiring mature workers. The first meeting was held April 18 in Little Rock, followed by a meeting May 17 in Hot Springs. Additional meetings will be held in Springdale, Mountain Home, Eastern Arkansas and South Arkansas.

Employers who wish to attend the breakfast in Fort Smith should R.S.V.P. to armeeting@aarp.org by June 9.